A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HAL,

Septem. the 26th 1675.

By *John Standish* B. D.
And one of His Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

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2 Cor. *Chap.* 5. *ver.* 20.

Now then we are Ambaſſadors *for* CHRIST, *as though* GOD *did beſeech you by us, We pray you in* CHRIST's *ſtead, be ye reconciled to* GOD.

THe matter of the Context which St. *Paul* infers theſe words upon, is of ſuch Tranſcendent Nature and Momentous Conſequence, that it may well beſpeak your attention with that Angel's awakening Preface on the like ſubject: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people!* 'Tis ſuch a ſtrange and raviſhing piece of News, as *Corinth*, *the Eye* of all *Greece*, could *not ſee*, till our Apoſtle made the diſcovery: As the itching *Ears* at *Athens* had never *heard* before He told it them too, from the UNKNOWN GOD; nor could it enter into the *heart* of Jew or Gentile, Man or Angel, *to conceive*, till the Eternal WORD came down from Heaven on purpoſe to reveal it. 'Tis

that ſtupendous *Myſtery hid from Ages*; that moſt Magnificent, and moſt Kingly work of God (as *Clemens* calls it) the Myſtery of Man's *Redemption*; to wit, *That God was in Chriſt, reconciling the World to himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes, making him to be ſin for us, that knew no ſin; that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* Rejoyce then, and *be of good chear, O ſons of men*, for *your ſins are forgiven*, Divine Juſtice is ſatisfied, the Debt paid, the Bond cancell'd, the Priſon doors ſet ope, and an Act of General Pardon paſs'd in the Court of Heaven, and ſeal'd on Earth with the Blood of *GOD* Himſelf, to make it more *unchangeable* than any Decree of the *Medes* and *Perſians*. The caſe is ſo well alter'd with the Bankrupt, Outlaw'd Seed of *Adam*, that nothing hinders now; but all men may be ſaved and made for ever; if they ſtand not in their own light: All degrees amongſt them, from the Judge of *Areopagus*, to the Jailor at *Philippi*; from the *Lord Treaſurer* of *Ethiopia*, to the Beggar at the Temple-gate; from the *Elect Lady*, to the Widow *Dorcas*; from the Houſhold of *Ceſar*, to that of *Stephanas*; from the *KING* himſelf that ſits upon the *Throne*, to him that grindeth at the

the *Mill*, all have an undoubted Right and Title to God the *Father's* Mercy, if they will but *kiſs* and *reverence* the *Son*; there's nothing wanting but their own conſent to make them all *Heirs of God*, *Joint-heirs with Chriſt* to everlaſting Glory. Conſent? Why, will there be any demur upon that? 'Tis not to part with, but take poſſeſſion of an Inheritance purchas'd for them: Not to *merit* or *buy*, but only to accept and wear an Immortal *Crown*. All's a caſe; Man is a wilful, wiſe, and ſtately Creature, that muſt be woed and courted to his own Felicity: And our gracious *LORD* (bleſſed be his name) hath made due Proviſion for that alſo; for when he *aſcended up on high to his former glory*, he left not us to the wide World, nor *Himſelf* without a *witneſs in doing us good*: For he founded a certain Order of men on purpoſe to be his *Delegates* and *Vicars*, to *preach the Goſpel of Peace every where*, *and Remiſſion of ſins in his name*, ſaying, as my *Father ſent me*, *ſo ſend I you*, *and lo I am with you*, *and your* Succeſſors, *to the Worlds end*: To them he committed his Word of *Reconciliation*, obliging them by all that is Sacred, to leave no ſtone unturn'd, but uſe all laudable means to perſwade and intreat

treat men (as in his own perſon) to come in upon Proclamation, that they may have life. *Now then We are Ambaſſadors*, &c.

In the words I ſhall conſider: 1. The Character of the Evangelical Miniſtry; which is, 1. General, *Ambaſſadors*; and then more ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing, Ambaſſadors for *CHRIST*. 2. The ſubject *matter*, ſum and purport of their *Ambaſſy*, be ye *reconciled to God*. 3. Their *manner of Addreſs*, in delivering this *Ambaſſy*, as *though God did beſeech you by us*, we *pray you in Chriſt's ſtead*. I begin with the firſt; and, 1. With their *general Character*, We are *Ambaſſadors*.

An *Ambaſſador* is properly one that repreſents his *KING* in a *Foreign* Country, as a Deputy or Lieutenant doth in his *own Dominions*; whoſe buſineſs is ἐκδημο πολιτεία (as the old Greeks call it) to manage his Maſters Affairs, Power and Polity *abroad*; to treat with other great *Kings* and *Emperors* upon the moſt weighty matters: Whereby (I ſuppoſe) he is diſtinguiſh'd from *Nuncio's*, *Agents*, and other modern names of ſuch as are either ſent to *petty Princes*,

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like those of *Italy* and *Germany*; or if to *Sovereigns*, upon *State-Ceremony*, or Messages of *lesser* moment.

By this *high* Metaphor, the Apostle here calls the *Evangelical Ministry*; and that (as I conceive) for some or other of the ensuing Reasons.

1. An *Ambassador* is suppos'd to be a man of *Integrity*, *faithful* to his Instructions, and *true* to his important Trust. No Gifts or Pensions can tempt his impregnable Fidelity to a surrender: He's not to be practis'd upon, or won to base Compliances with a *Foreign Crown*; as knowing, that if he be taken tardy, or make excursions beyond his Line, if by his *fraud* or *falseness*, he lose the least *hair* of his Masters honour, it may chance to cost him his own *head*. Much more is it requir'd of them in the Text, as *Stewards* of the *Mysteries of God*, that they be found faithful unto the death. The *false* Prophet said, but *true* in that, though *Balac* would *give me the house full of Gold and Silver, I cannot go beyond the Commandment of the Lord.* They dare not say, *Peace, peace, when there is*

no peace; nor flatter any man living in his sins, to gain *half a Kingdom*. When they address to one of the *Potentates* (says *Epictetus*) they remember there is *Another above*, that sees and hears all that passes; and of the two, they are most obliged to please or fear *Him*. His surly Yeomen of the Guard could not force the *Lacedemonian Legates* to fall down and worship the *mighty Persian Monarch*, because against the express Law of *Lycurgus*: From whence *Origen* infers, much less should *Men* or *Devils* affright them that are engag'd in this more Divine *Ambassy*, to give away their Masters honour to the King of *Persia*, *Greece*, or *any other*, as being contrary to the whole Tenour of his Everlasting Gospel. Wherefore let all such as *Judas*-like, betray their Master for a few shekels of Silver; or teach the *Traditions* of *Men* and *Doctrines* of *Devils*, for the Word of *God*, be (as St. *Paul* saith) *Anathema Maranatha*; that is, stand condemned till their Lord come.

2. An *Ambassador* is presum'd to be one of more than common *Prudence*, *Sagacity* and *Judgment*, that understands his Errand throughly, and such *Imperial Laws* as concern the Pleas of

of his Masters Crown. *Plutarch* is too light and jocular, when he's for sending them that most *desire*, and least *deserve* it, that so they may be expos'd and *laugh'd* at: For it is no *laughing* matter sure, when *Crowns* and *Kingdoms* lie at stake: They had more need be men of good Wisdom and Brains, that can discern and nick the different Humour and Guise of divers Countries, can soar aloft, and treat the *Italian* in a Circuit of Pompous words (before they stoop to the *Point*;) and be as blunt with the *Switzers*, that *hate* all Language: That understand the great Art of *Timing things well*; there being (says *Solomon*) *a proper season for every purpose under Heaven.* I am sure, our Lord charges his Ambassadors (saving their Innocence) to be wise as *Serpents*, as being to deal with that Politick *Old* Serpent, and countermine the depths of *Satan.* On this account St. *Paul* became *all things to all men*, that *he might by all means save some.* For one *Remedy* will not serve for every *Disease*; nor are all *Truths* proper to be spoken at all times. Our Saviour did not challenge the Jews for *Idolatry* or *Usury*, but for *spiritual Pride*, *Hypocrisie* and *Traditions* (where the shooe pincht:) But then his Apo-

ſtles *turning* to the *Gentiles*, fell foul upon *Superſtition* and *Idolatry* (their common Diſtempers) the firſt thing they did; to inform their Succeſſors, that they ſhould not ſpend their breath in declaiming againſt ſins quite out of *faſhion*, or confuting old *obſolete* Hereſies (which were much like killing a man that was dead before;) or treating *Chriſtian Aſſemblies* with the ſame Diſcourſe that might better ſerve to convert the *Great Turk*. They ſhould not handle profeſſed *Chriſtians* (though never ſo *Carnal*) as *Origen*, *Juſtin Martyr* or *Tertullian* did *rank Heathen*; nor lay out all their pains and oyl about the firſt *Elements*, though it be to demonſtrate *our Religion* to be the *beſt* of all others, and moſt *perfective* of *Humane Nature*: For *Principles* are not to be made *cheap*, and every day brought upon the *Stage*, ſpecially where they were never denied. What though one man commit *Murther*, another *Adultery*, a third *Treaſon*, a fourth *Blaſphemy*; muſt I go prove in all haſte, and upon every turn, that there is a *GOD*? They *all* know that as well as I, unleſs they will in their Huffs deny their *own Being*, and belye their own *Conſciences*: by Arguments too far fetch'd, or proving *too much*, we prove *nothing*

thing at all, or that which no man queſtions. Prudence ſhould rather teach us, with due regard to *time*, *place* and *perſons*, to bend our utmoſt ſtrength and main counſels againſt the *preſent* and moſt *predominant* Errours, whether in *Faith* or *Morals*.

3. An *Ambaſſador* ſhould have compentent *Eloquence*, a *Tongue well hung* (we ſay) for that his proper buſineſs is to *ſpeak*, and he is ſaid to have his *Audience* as an *Orator*. He is to effect that which *equity* perſwades, or neceſſity requires by force of *Argument*, to prevent the force of *Arms*, and that is not to be done by a mere noiſe and flood of words, without one drop of ſenſe; but he muſt be able to ſpeak powerfully, to move, charm, lead mens hearts in triumph, and conquer minds with the pleaſing Arms of Eloquence. *Antipater* therefore deſir'd the *Athenians* to ſend their *Orator* no more to *Him*, becauſe by his prodigious Art of ſpeaking (were the cauſe *right* or *wrong*) he baffled and topp'd all offers made againſt him. Now that St. *Paul* alludes here prfeſſedly to this property, I appeal to the very *ſtile* of the Text: Only there is this difference between

tween CHRISTS Ambaſſadors and all *others*, that *they* rely not upon their own ſtrength of parts and *Oratory*, nor take up with the common Artifices and *enticing words of mans wiſdom*; but their chief *Rhetorick* and height of *Eloquence* lies in the *Demonſtration of the Spirit*, *Power* and *Wiſdom of God*.

4. Laſtly, An *Ambaſſador* yet lacks *one thing* more before he goes; that is, a *Commiſſion*, to make his Acts *Authentick*, which were otherwiſe *null* and *void*, and himſelf a great *Cheat*. *Demoſthenes* hath left a laſting Brand of Infamy upon *Æſchines*, for going *Ambaſſador* to *Philip* on his own head: But whether we ſhould take the *Orator* for a faithful *Hiſtorian* in the caſe, may be perhaps a *queſtion*. No *queſtion* ſuch an Act were *crimen lætæ Majeſtatis* in all *Empires*; nay *Treaſon* in a very high degree, it being a greater affront to *Sovereignty*, to counterfeit a King's *Perſon*, than either his Royal *Coyn*, *Hand* or *Seal*. Thus St. *Paul* demands peremptorily, How ſhall they *preach*, except they be *ſent*? that is, they are *falſe Apoſtles*, *Traytors* to God's everlaſting *Crown* and *Dignity*, that do preſume it. Be a man never ſo gifted and

and able, never such a *Son* of *Thunder*, never so *Eloquent* and *Mighty* in *the Scriptures*; yet without due Authority, he hath no *part* or *lot in this matter*: *For no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*, *Heb.* 5. Now as the *Apostles* were in quality of *Ambassadors extraordinary*, *commissioned* immediately by *CHRIST* himself, and endued with mighty gifts of the *Spirit*, necessary for the first planting of the *Christian Faith*: So their lawful Successors are *Leigers*, and *in ordinary called also of God*; but by the Mediation of those *Men*, on whom the *Apostles* derived their *Mission* and *Unction* they received from *CHRIST*.

Thus we see in what sense they are *Ambassadors*, and pardon me if I hence *infer*, that they ought to be received as *such*, and *accounted worthy* of single *honour* and respect (at least) for their very *Work* and *Office* sake.

To assert the Dignity of this *Holy Calling* amongst *Christians*, was once indeed *superfluous*, when men were ready to adore and *sacrifice* to them as *Gods*, and *pluck out their own eyes for them*: But is perhaps as *necessary* now, when the World

World is run into the other *extreme*, and so far from *communicating to them all good things*; (*Gal.* 6.) that they will hardly give them *one good word*: When the *Apostate* Emperours Scoff is so often laid in their dish, That *CHRIST* and his *Apostles* despised the Wealth and Honours of this World: Though the arguing is most inconsequent, from their times of *Persecution*, to ours of *Peace*; from *Heathen* Empires, to *Christian* Monarchies. Besides, if they take the *Context* along with them, they will find, that in those days *Lay-Christians* had as little repute or *wealth* as the *Clergy*; *all they had* (though ne're so much) was freely *laid down* at those poor *Apostles feet*, for the publick service of the *Church*.

As for those little mighty *Wits*, and goodly Masters of *Reason*, that are ever whetting their *Tongues* and *Pens* to expose them to *contempt*; alas, they utterly miss their aim; for it is the credit of our *Religion* and its *Ministers*, that *Nero* spake, *Celsus* wrote, and *Julian* acted against them. They are not moved at *Celsus* his prodigious *Calumny*, that they *conjured* and dealt with *familiar Spirits*; when (God knows) they only

only cast them out in the Name of *JESUS*. They rejoyce to suffer *shame*, and be Nick-named *Fops*, *Formalists*, and *Thinking-Fools*, by men of the same spirit with them that said the *Son* of *GOD* himself had a *Devil*. But yet these *Hero's* might remember in their *cold blood*, and *sober* intervals (if they have any) that as it is against the *Law* of *Nations* to cast dirt upon, and offer indignities to an *Ambassador*, so the affront aims chiefly at his *Prince*; and such as *despise them*, *despise him that sent them*, who will in due time redeem his own Honour, and pay *them* that they have *deserved*: Mean while we'll be *reveng'd* of them too, but only in our *Churches Prayer* (and God speed it well!) that it may *please him to forgive our Enemies*, *Persecutors* and *Slanderers*, and *to turn their hearts*. But,

2. You need not fear the *Sons of* Levi *should take* too *much upon them* in this *high Title*, if you consider their more *special Character*, as they are Ambassadors for *CHRIST*. A *King* indeed, but one whose *Kingdom* was not of *this World*: Who never used more *secular* Pomp in all his life, but once *riding into* Jerusalem

upon an Asses Colt: A *King* indeed, but his Courtiers poor *Fishermen* and *Publicans*; his Scepter a *Reed*, his Crown made of *Thorns*, and his Throne an ignominious *Cross*: And his *Disciples are not greater than their Lord*, they pretend not to dispose of *Crowns* and *Kingdoms*, (let Him at *Rome* answer for that, who says, we know by what Right and Precedent, *All these will I give thee*:) They claim no *Secular* Honours or Priviledges, but what they owe to the pious Bounty of *Christian Princes*, who are graciously pleas'd to treat them as *Prophets*; and shall therefore receive a *Prophets* reward: *Their power* (says a Learned man) is *armed only with a spiritual Sword (the wounds whereof are little felt or dreaded in this World) supported mostly with a mean temporal Fortune; yet it has stood hitherto against all Opposition, and shall stand for ever.*

But whether they meet with Friends or Foes, Love or Hatred, Frowns or Favours *here*, they are sure of a Reward most glorious hereafter, if they can but give their *Master* (who is since declared *King of kings*) a good account of their great *Errand* and *Business* here on Earth. Which leads me to the second thing considerable,

considerable, The *subject matter*, *sum* and *purport* of their *Ambassy*, in those words, *Be ye reconciled unto God.*

Reconciliation imports a returning into *Favour* and *Friendship*, after a former *Enmity* or *Falling-out* between Parties. Now though *man* be the sole Party *offending*, that made the breach by *sin*, his own *voluntary* act; yet *God* hath been graciously *reconciled* to Him ever since the hour of *CHRISTS* death, which he accepted as a *full* and *perfect satisfaction for the sins of the whole World*: All the difficulty is (which so many *Ambassadors* are daily sent about) to prevail with *man* to be reconciled to *God*. *Reconciled*? Surely that must be an *hard saying*, clogg'd with some impossible Condition, that makes men start so at, fly from, and not endure to hear on't. Yes, it is so; for it requires them to do---What shall I say? to do just *nothing*, in comparison; rather to be *passive* (as the Verb καταλλάγητε here is) and not hinder *God* from making them *happy*. Yes; it requires them to renounce their own Merits (and that's a mighty piece of *Self-denial* for wretched sinners that never had *any*) and then cry *Peccavi*, before

they can obtain *Mercy*: It lays that *grievous* burthen upon them, to be *Friends* with *God*, or rather to ſuffer *God* to be ſo far *Lord* of their *Wills*, as to advance them (like the great *Abraham*) to be his boſom *Friends* and *Favourites*. In a word, and not to mince the matter, there being no *name under Heaven, whereby we can be ſaved, but* the *name of JESUS*, it requires us all to believe ſtedfaſtly in, and depend wholly upon *Him*, both for *pardon* of our ſins, and *power* againſt them. 1. For *Pardon*, we muſt ſue *that* out in and through his *Death*; for without his *precious Bloodſhed, there is no Remiſſion of ſins*; and without our acceptance, none for *us* however. Though there be *Balm in* Gilead, and a *Phyſician there*, yet if men will not uſe them, no wonder if they *periſh*, and *their blood be upon their own heads*: They may think never ſo well of their own *Works* and *Ways*, but when all is done, they muſt take Sanctuary in that *new and living Way, which he conſecrated for us through the veil*, that is, *his Fleſh*, Hebr. 10. or they're undone for ever. For as we are not of kin to *CHRIST*, but only by the *Mother's* ſide, as he is *fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone*, and God the *Father* doth forgive no mans ſins, but

but for *Christ's* Merits, offer'd in *our Nature* upon the *Cross*: And so doth he convey *this* and all other Blessings to us, only through his *Son* as our *Mediator*; that is, through his *Humanity*, as the only *Band* by which we are *united* and *reconciled* to the *Divine Nature*. Wherefore, 2. We must depend upon him also for *Grace* and *Power* against *sin*, by virtue of his *Resurrection* and *Life*, to purifie our *Hearts* and *Consciences*, and keep that Tyrant *Sin* from *reigning* (at least) *in our* mortal Bodies. Never did the most *Gracious Prince* pardon *Rebels*, but upon that *one* Condition, That they would turn *Loyal Subjects*: Therefore (says St. *Paul*) if any man be in *Christ*, he is a *new Creature*; he has a *new* heart, *new* desires, *new* principles, *new* life, all things *new*: He's not the *same* man, he's quite chang'd, like the *Prodigal Son*, *come to himself*, to a sense of his *former* follies, and *present* wants; or like the *man among the Tombs*, who when the *Devils* were gone out of him, sate *dutifully at Jesus feet*, *clothed*, *and in his right mind*. This is indeed the hardest *Chapter* in all our *Word* of *Reconciliation*; but yet he that *runs* may *read* it, if (with holy *David*) he takes the right *course*, *Commit thy way unto the Lord*, *and put thy trust in him*,

him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs: For is there any thing impoſſible with *God*. The *heart* of all men, even of *Kings* (ſays *Solomon*) *is in the hand of the Lord, as Rivers of water, he turneth it whitherſoever he pleaſeth*. What though Nature of it ſelf be weak and impotent, ſo long as it is now *endued with power from on high*? Indeed our Saviour tells us plainly (to ſhew us our own inſufficiency) *without Me ye can do nothing*: But St. *Paul* as truly anſwers for himſelf, and us alſo, *I can do all things through* CHRIST *that ſtrengthens me*. And when we read that ſuch *Vertue went out* of *Chriſt* (whilſt in the *form of a Servant*) that it cur'd the *Woman* of her *Bloody Iſſue*, upon but touching the *Hem* of his *Garment*, why ſhould it ſeem incredible that his glorified Humane Nature (now he is *Lord of all*) ſhould diſtil his vertual Preſence and Life upon our Souls, to heal our infirmities? that he ſhould impart his own Graces to us, and derive certain *meaſures* of the ſame *holy Spirit* upon us, which himſelf *as man*, had *without meaſure*; becauſe in *him the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily*? Why ſhould it be thought ſtrange, that this holy Spirit that united GOD and *Man* in one Perſon, ſhould as *really* unite us

us to our own Nature in *CHRIST*, the *Body to the Head*, the *Branches to the Vine*, and *make him dwell in us*, and *us in him*; *him one with us*, *and us with him*, as the Scripture ſpeaks. If any man think our *Union* with *CHRIST* to be merely *Political*; that is, no more than you may conceive between *King Bramble* (in the Parable) and the reſt of the *Trees* his *Subjects*, he is in a very novel and groſs miſtake: To which I ſhall at preſent only oppoſe the words of two or three ſound Divines of our own Church; *Though the Holy Ghoſt doth work Faith and other Graces in our Souls, yet he doth not by theſe unite our Souls or Spirits immediately to himſelf, but unto CHRISTS Humane Nature*: So the profound Dr. *Jackſon*; *CHRIST is as truly united to me, and I to him, as my arm is united and knit to my ſhoulder*: So the Judicious *Hooker* in plain Engliſh, *By the influence of his preſent life, CHRIST undergoes, as it were, a ſecond Incarnation, living and dwelling in our hearts by his Grace, and reigning powerfully in our ſouls by Faith*: So the Learned *Chillingworth*, to add no more. So that upon the whole matter, the ſum of our *Ambaſſy* is this, That *JESUS CHRIST* is both the *Author and finiſher of*

our

our Faith; that he hath ſolemnly promis'd to *give his holy Spirit to them that ask him*; that if men be not wanting to themſelves, but reſign their hearts to his Conduct, nay, if they don't forcibly *reſiſt* him, and quench the holy flames he kindles in their Souls, through his Servants Miniſtry, he will make them real partakers of the Grace of *CHRIST*, by working in them a firm Hope, fervent Love, pure Conſcience, clean Heart, ſober Mind, chaſt Body, pious Soul, holy Life, and firſt and laſt, a true Faith in *JESUS CHRIST*; without which it is *impoſſible to pleaſe*, or to be *reconciled to GOD*.

And if theſe things be ſo, I cannot but animadvert a while upon thoſe *falſe Apoſtles*, and *deceitful Workers*, who inſtead of building, are ever pecking at the Foundation of our Faith with their *Axes* and *Hammers*, in great *Blaſphemies*, and leſſer *Criticiſms*, to change the *old ſound word* of *Reconciliation*, for new Ideas, and devices of their own, and other mens Brains: That would ſupplant *Chriſtian* Religion with *Natural* Theologie; and turn the *Grace* of God into a *wanton* Notion of *Morality*; that impiouſly

ously deny both the *Lord that bought them* and his *Holy Spirit, that should seal them to the day of Redemption*, making *Reason, Reason, Reason*, their only *Trinity*, and sole Standard, whereby to measure both the Principles and Conclusions of *Faith*; that preach up *Natural* and *Moral* Religion, without the *Grace* of *God*, and *Faith in Christ*; which is at best, beginning at the wrong end, and making Superstructures without a Foundation: For the *Jew* cannot be saved by the Law of *Moses*, much less the *Gentile* by all the Works of the Law of *Nature*; which unless actuated by a lively *Faith*, are no better than the *cutting off a Dogs neck*, or the *Sacrifice of a Fool*. A Truth that *Socrates* himself (in an ancient Dialogue ascribed to *Plato*) makes no scruple to consent unto, when he says ingenuously---that *no man can be good and vertuous by Nature, Art, Discipline, Example, or any other manner of way, but only by Divine Inspiration*: So far do they out-strip a very *Heathen*, that teach---*a good Life will carry men to Heaven, though they be*

Jews, Turks, Antichristians, or worse such damnable Hereticks in point of Faith. If any such as these be *crept in among* us *unawares*, I am sure there is as much need of a *Test* for *them* (how slily soever they carry it by amusing the World with other fears) as for the rankest Errour in all the *Pope's* Dominions. And I beseech you (Brethren in our *LORD*) beware of them: Ye shall *know them by their Fruits*, as *He* Himself foretels you: He does not mean the *Fruits* of their Lives (for they are the closest of all other *Hypocrites*, they *go* demurely in *Sheeps clothing too*:) But the *Fruits* and Consequents of their Doctrine; which are dismal enough (one would think) to make themselves *afraid*, as *Moses* was of his own *Rod* turn'd into a *Serpent*: For they are such as these---*That there is no such thing as supernatural Grace*---*That CHRIST dyed in vain*----*That ye are yet in your sins*----*and every man must be his own Saviour, or he is damn'd for ever.* From which-----Good *LORD* deliver us! and *GOD* grant, that, by the Wisdom

Wiſdom and Vigilance of the *Defender* of our *Faith*, and his *Prelates* under *Him*, no ſuch Foreign Poyſon may be privily conveighed (through Preſs or Pulpit) into our *Church*: That thoſe black-mouth'd Authors bearing date from *Irenopolis*, may receive ſo *timely* and *publick* a check, as that we ſhall not need to fear their growing the only *Divines* in Vogue by the next Age: That we may never live to ſee our Youth trained up in the *Cracovian Catechiſm*; never live to hear our ſelves called by any other *New Name*, but that of *GOD'S* own giving: That as the Diſciples were *firſt* called at *Antioch*, ſo they may be *laſt* called *CHRISTIANS* here in *England*.

And now I come to the third and laſt part of my Text, The *manner* of the true *Ambaſſadors* Addreſs; in thoſe words----*As though GOD did beſeech you by us, We pray you in CHRIST'S ſtead.*

Which is first modeſt and humble: *We pray and beſeech.* Let thoſe Haughty *Poliſh Envoys* ſwagger themſelves and others out of their *Creed*: Let the *Diſciplinarian Agents* Reprobate all the World, but their own private *Elect*: Let the *Pope's* Legates *à Latere*, *Lord it* over mens Eſtates and Conſciences; let *Theu will* and *require* all upon pain of Damnation, to put their necks under his feet, who in the Pride of his heart writes himſelf, *Servus Servorum*, that is (in the Vulgar Tranſlation) *Lord of lords*: As for us we have no ſuch Meſſage, we have not *ſo learned Chriſt.* We only pray you as *men* for whom *CHRIST died*, *quit your ſelves like men*, and fly to Mercy ſpeedily, leſt you fall into the hands of Juſtice, by letting your *Sun go down upon the Wrath of God.* You have all a merciful Saviour, who never did, never will refuſe a ſincere Penitent (if you will take his own word for it) *Him that cometh unto me*, (ὁ μὴ) *I will in no wiſe*, by no

no means *cast out*. We beseech you as *Christians*, who have not only heard *there is a Holy Ghost*, but are baptized into the name of the Eternal TRINITY; have often *tasted of the heavenly Gifts and Powers of the World to come*. We beseech you let the *love of CHRIST constrain you*, to improve the Talent put into your hand, and suffer his Holy Spirit to blow up those sparks of Grace ye have covered o're with ashes in your hearts. O let not that Blessed *Comforter* depart finally from you for the World, as he did from *Saul*; (for then an Evil Spirit will soon possess and vex, and send you to *Endor*:) But if ye have neglected his Grace, and fallen into sin (as who can plead Not-guilty? Who can tell *how oft he offendeth?*) implore his assistance *heartily*, wait his approach *humbly*, and attend his motions *earnestly*, and he will raise you again to *Newness of Life*, he will bring you fresh Auxiliaries from your *glorified Saviour*, and in due time unite you

so

ſo firmly unto *Him*, that your ſins ſhall be chargeable only upon *Him*; *His* Merits put on your Accompt, and ſufficient *Vertue ſhall go out of Him to cleanſe you from all Unrighteouſneſs.*

2. And laſtly, be their *Addreſs* never ſo *humble*, it runs in a more then *Humane* ſtile; for, *We pray you in* CHRIST'S *ſtead*, and however you put us off till a a more *convenient ſeaſon*: Yet (as the voice from Heaven ſaid) *hear* HIM; HIM that once took the *Curſe* of God upon him for you, and is ever at his right hand interceding for his *Bleſſings* on you: HIM, to whom *all power is committed both in Heaven and Earth*; who even as Son of *Man*, is now Lord of *Angels*, *Lord of all.* The Requeſts of *Kings* have been uſed to go for Commands with dutiful *Subjects*; And when the KING OF KINGS *prays* and begs but one thing of you, can ye poſſibly deny *Him*? Sure no *Man* can be ſo much a *Monſter*; no *Gentleman* ſo much a *Jew*.

We

We pray you in Christ's stead: What shall I say more? Yes; not only the glorified Son of *Man*, but *GOD* himself doth *beseech you by us too*. Wonder not that he speaks to you by men of *like-passions* with your selves, unless you wonder at his infinite Mercy: For ye can neither *see* nor hear *HIM* and *live*; one glimpse (ye know) even of *CHRIST'S* glorious *Body*, struck *Saul* to the *ground blind*, and half dead: *Speak Thou with us* (said *Israel* to *Moses*) *and let not GOD speak with us, lest we Die*. Besides, it is *GOD'S* Prerogative alone, to shew his own *Strength* by the most *weak* Instruments. It was not a man of mean Person and Presence, and then a *Prisoner* at the Bar too, that made the stout *Felix* shake and *tremble*: It was not *Elijah's* word (a silly plain Prophet) that fell like Thunder upon the great guilty *Ahab*, and struck a *Palsie* into his Joynts, and forc'd him to his *Sackcloth* and *Ashes*; but the *Word* of the *Living God*; which if, as soft *Fire*, it cannot melt, like a strong

Hammer

Hammer oft breaks the Rocky Heart in pieces. The ſame *GOD* doth not now thunder and threaten, but *pray* and *beſeech you by us*: *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth!* The Almighty *Creator* becomes (as it were) an humble Petitioner to his own *Creature*; and to ſhew he is in good earneſt, becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater, he hath ſworn by himſelf, upon his own *Life* and *Honour*, *As I live* (*ſaith the LORD*) *I will not the death of a ſinner*: Who can deſpiſe ſuch ardent Love? Who can ſpurn at ſuch infinite tender Bowels? Who can reſiſt that *ſtill ſmall Voyce*, the ſecret, but piercing and importunate whiſpers of his Holy *SPIRIT* in your hearts, which the Tongue of *Men and Angels* cannot expreſs, no, nor all the powers of *Men and Devils* (without your own conſent) render ineffectual? And what doth the *Lord thy God* thus *require*, nay *requeſt and beſeech of thee, O Man?* If he had *bid thee do ſome great thing*, to *cure thy* natural *Leproſie*, wouldſt thou *not have done it?* How much rather

rather then, when he ſaith unto thee, only *waſh in the blood of the Covenant*, and *be clean?* Only be *reconciled*, be hearty friends with thy *God*, make what returns thou canſt of his wonderful Love. Indeed the *tinckling of three little Bells in a Country Steeple*, and the Peaſants flocking to *the Towns end and crying*, *GOD SAVE THE KING! adds not much to the Majeſty of a Potent Monarch*; yet (as that great Preacher and Prelate obſerves) it *is all they can do*; *it ſhews their honeſt love, and hearty affections, and ſo ſounds well, and pleaſes the Royal ear*: Much more will your merciful God accept the will for the deed: And let but men husband their proportion of *Grace* as well as they can; let them but ſhew their integrity of heart, and earneſt deſires, and then do their faithful endeavours to *ſerve*, *love* and *honour Him*, and he asks no more; being ready to ſupply all their defects and imperfections, out of the inexhauſtible Fountain of *CHRISTS Righteouſneſs*. This is all that *God doth beſeech you by us*; and

if any man will deny him this, he muſt needs confeſs his *Damnation is juſt*; which GOD forbid, and I have done: *For we are Ambaſſadors for* CHRIST, *as though* GOD *the* HOLY GHOST *did beſeech you by us, We pray you in* CHRIST GOD THE SON'S *ſtead, be ye reconciled to* GOD THE FATHER. To which Eternal TRINITY, ONE GOD, be the Eternal *Kingdom, Power and Glory.* AMEN.

FINIS.

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